

**Original citation:**

Coaffee, Jon. (2015) The uneven geographies of the Olympic carceral : from exceptionalism to normalisation. The Geographical Journal, 181 (3). pp. 199-211.

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*The Geographical Journal*, 2014, Issue 181, Volume 3, pages 199-211, doi:  
10.1111/geoj.12081

**The uneven geographies of the Olympic carceral: from exceptionalism to normalisation**

Jon Coaffee

## **Abstract**

In recent years a vast academic literature has developed around the concept of 'militarising' or 'securitising' cities and in particular the policy responses to the occurrence of crime, fear of crime and the evaluation of cities as strategic sites for a spectrum of large-scale increasingly destructive perturbations in everyday urban life, such as riots, protest and acts of terrorism. Increasingly policy interventions in response to such threats have embodied characteristics of the 'carceral archipelago' where incarceration techniques and strategies are punitively deployed within public places of the city and embedded within the design of urban space. Such attempts at creating increasingly hyper-carceral spaces have often been supported by an array of legislation and regulation targeting the control of particular activities deemed unacceptable or inappropriate. This paper draws conceptually from the urban security literature noted above and emerging studies within the nascent sub-discipline of carceral geography, and examines their convergence on the issue of Olympic security planning. This highlights the various spatial strategies and imprints that emerge from new conceptualisations and practices of securitisation, and how these might be seen to characterise an increasingly punitive state. Here Agamben's studies of exceptionality are deployed to highlight how 'lockdown' security often becomes the 'normal' option for Olympic cities, seen as being on the frontline in the war on terror, and how a range of uneven geographies emerge and are sustained in such locations before, during and after the event. Empirically the paper uses data from ethnographic research focusing on the experiences of security preparation for, and post-event legacy of, the London 2012 Olympics. The paper also seeks to highlight how lessons from the military-carceral security strategies deployed in London have been transferred to subsequent host cities of Sochi (2014) and Rio de Janeiro (2016).

Key words: Olympic security, urban, carceral, state of exception, normalisation

## The uneven geographies of the Olympic carceral: from exceptionalism to normalisation

On 29 December 2013 a person-borne improvised explosive device (suicide bomb) was detonated at the entrance of the main rail station in the southern Russian city of Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad) killing 17 people. The following day a similar device destroyed a trolleybus in the city killing a further 14 people. Although Volgograd is located 700 km from the 2014 Winter Olympics host city, Sochi, the attacks were widely linked to political instability and anti-Russian sentiment in the Northern Caucasuses and prior threats made by Islamic militants to attack the Sochi Games with 'maximum force'. The Volgograd attacks starkly illustrated the risks faced in any Olympic city or nation in protecting crowded public spaces from attack, as well as illuminating the inevitable response of hyper-carceral security required/desired in order to protect the reputation of the host nation and to fulfil International Olympic Committee (IOC) stipulations of delivering a 'safe and secure' games for the Olympic family.

The immediacy of response in Sochi and the uneven spatial imprints of such advanced securitisation are emblematic of a vast academic literature that has developed around the concept of 'militarising' or 'securitising' cities in the last 20 years and in particular the policy responses to the occurrence of crime, fear of crime and the evaluation of cities as strategic sites for a spectrum of large-scale increasingly destructive 'perturbations' in everyday urban life, such as riots, protest and acts of terrorism (Coaffee *et al.* 2008; Graham 2010). Much of this work is framed by the emergence of a new body of work on critical urban geopolitics focused upon the links between political violence and the built fabric of cities in recognition that, in the post-Cold War era, 'new' twenty-first century wars will be largely urban in orientation, with the city becoming both the target and the crucible of political violence (Coaffee 2000 2013; Graham 2004 2006; Weizman 2004; Coward 2006). Such security threats and hyper-carceral responses are extrapolated when mega-sporting events 'come to town'.

Many traditional policy interventions in response to terrorist or criminal threats have embodied characteristics of the 'carceral archipelago' where incarceration techniques and strategies are punitively deployed within the public realm and embedded within the design of

security-obsessed urbanism. Here previous techniques focused on 'designing out' threats have commonly led to the use of ever-advancing surveillance technologies and the construction of fixed territorial borders, security cordons and 'rings of steel' to protect 'at risk' or vulnerable locations (Coaffee 2004). Moreover, such techniques have often been supported by an array of legislative powers and regulatory guidance which targets the control of particular activities deemed unacceptable or inappropriate.

Conceptually this paper will draw from the aforementioned literature on urban security and emerging studies within nascent sub-discipline of carceral geography, and examine their convergence on the issue of mega-event security planning in the global city. Here Giorgio Agamben's studies of exceptionality (2005) are deployed to highlight how 'lockdown' security often becomes the 'normal' option for Olympic cities, seen as being on the frontline in the war on terror, and how a range of uneven geographies emerge and are sustained in such locations before, during and after the event. Empirically the paper uses data from ethnographic research focusing on the experiences of security preparation for, and post-event legacy of, the London summer 2012 Olympics. This will highlight the various spatial strategies and imprints that emerge from new conceptualisations and practices of urban security, and how these might be seen to characterise an increasingly punitive state. The paper also seeks to highlight how lessons from the military-carceral security strategies deployed in London have been transferred to subsequent host cities. Here analysis illuminates the commonalities and differences between security approaches utilised in London and those in the Olympic cities of Sochi (2014) and Rio de Janeiro (2016).

### **Situating Olympic security**

In *Discipline and punish* Foucault (1977) used the term 'carceral archipelago' (drawing inspiration from Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*) to characterise how penitentiary techniques were increasingly being deployed in public policy programmes to expand disciplinary control over the entire social body. In this reading, the city was seen as the place where techniques were mediated as a 'punitive city' or 'carceral city' (see Cohen 1979) and where landscape markers continuously reinforce a code of control embodying a disciplinary society. The ideal type of controlling carceral environment was envisioned as the Panopticon

where the few see the many and where the centralised surveillant gaze constitutes ‘visible and unverifiable’ power (Foucault 1977, 200). Such political techniques and technologies were seen to spread beyond the prison wall, through the ‘carceral texture of society’ (p. 304) as they become embedded within myriad social control systems culminating in the selective ordering of the late modern city. Foucault’s ideas, particularly those emphasising the ubiquity of coercive techniques, served to influence a range of geographical discourses in the 1990s and 2000s in urban security-related topics where ideas of enclosure and social control, and techniques of ordering, become normalised through the imposition of security assemblages: surveillance and societies of control where the explosion of new technology served to facilitate the increased automation of everyday life (Lyon 2001; Deleuze 1997); the rise of carceral places as one of the ‘geographies of restructuring’ in the postmodern city and the expansion of ‘carceral areas/ archipelagos’ that are increasingly privately controlled as the welfare state contracts and the power of the police rises (Soja 1995 2000); ‘fortress cities’ and carceral ecologies where affluent fortified cells coexist with places of terror (Davis 1990 1998); interdictory spaces and spatial cleansing where (privatised) control over urban spaces leads to a range of exclusionary practices (Flusty 1994; Sibley 1995); revanchist urbanism where punitive policing facilitates urban ordering and upgrading through the removal of the ‘other’ (Smith 1996); and perhaps most notably from the perspective of this paper, military urbanism where militarised strategies are increasingly embedded within the civic realm, and systems of management to enhance urban resilience as a response to a growing international terrorist threat (Coaffee 2003 2009a; Graham 2010)<sup>1</sup>.

More recently, wider geographical literature on the punitive nature of nation states and particularly the way in which the spaces and practices of incarceration are reflective of broader social trends – carceral geography – has become increasingly important in thinking about how we consider the everyday imprints of urban security. Carceral geography is informed by not dissimilar literatures to urban security, and in particular is in dialogue with the work of Foucault (1977) on the development of the prison, surveillance and the regulation of space and docility of bodies; de Certeau (1984) on the strategies of the (relatively) powerless when occupying and moving through controlled spaces; and theories of liminality (Van Gennep 1960) and mobility (see, for example, Moran *et al.* 2013; Moran forthcoming). Carceral geography, described by Philo (2012, 4) as a sub-strand of

‘geographical security studies’, has drawn attention to consideration of ‘the spaces set aside for “securing” – detaining, locking up/away – problematic populations of one kind or another’. However, as argued elsewhere (Moran 2013), a more nuanced interpretation is emerging in the field where three main areas of interest can be broadly characterised: the nature of carceral spaces and experiences within them; the spatial geographies of carceral systems; and the relationship between the carceral and an increasingly punitive state. A major contribution of this body of work is in its suggestion that the ‘carceral’ is something *more* than merely the spaces in which individuals are confined – rather, that the ‘carceral’ is a social and psychological construction relevant both within and outside physical spaces of incarceration. This is perhaps best demonstrated by ‘the carceral continuum’ (Wacquant 2009) where the expansive ‘prisonfare’ from the penitentiary to the ghetto serves to perpetuate the stigmatisation and marginalisation of certain groups.

Combined, these recent works from urban security and carceral geography pose a set of important research questions for urban geographers that can be used to interrogate the theories and spatial practices of hyper-carcerality: the nature, materiality and experience of carceral or secured spaces; the role of particular agencies (including, but not limited to, the State) in promoting or alleviating conditions of insecurity; notions of the ‘carceral’ as a social construction relevant both within and outside physical spaces of insecurity/incarceration, informing the relationship between the ‘carceral’ and a ‘punitive’ state; the relationship between spaces of concentrated security and the impact of such places on the communities which host or surround them; the impact of defensive strategies and measures upon social, political and economic life; and how State responses to crime, recidivism, insecurity and insurrection and terrorism and counter-terrorism are experienced.

A collective lens through which to view these processes, and to illuminate the uneven geographies they produce, is Agamben’s work on states/spaces of exception (1998, 2005). In such spatial configurations the rule of law is suspended to facilitate extraordinary social control where citizens can be literally stripped of political rights (*homo sacer*) altering the established relationship between the state/sovereign and the citizenry within a particular territory, most graphically represented by the prisoner camp. Such spaces are seen to represent an ‘ambiguous zone . . . [a] no-man’s land between public law and political fact’

(Agamben 2005, 1–2). Although a detailed exploration of Agamben’s work lies beyond the remit of this paper it is worth reflecting upon some of this theoretical ideas in light of the many ways in which state–citizen relationships have been irreparably altered by the multitude of policy and legal processes enacted since the devastating events of 9/11 to cope with what many have observed as a permanent state of emergency (Coaffee and Murakami Wood 2006). As Agamben, writing in the wake of 9/11, noted, such exceptionalism within particular locales becomes a ‘dominant paradigm of government’ (2005, 3). As Minca (2006) commented, the state of exception is firmly rooted in the notion of crisis and has become the new biopolitical nomos, all too familiar in the global war on terror. Moreover, Agamben’s work has also highlighted how such exceptional conditions become normalised – how ‘wartime’ conditions are often transferred to ‘peacetime’ with little social scrutiny. From a security studies perspective others have also noted how the new biopolitical security dispositif becomes normalised under attempts to anticipate future risk and threats. As Arias (2011, 370) has argued, this ‘biopolitical paradigm organises life in such a way that it is understood as constant contingency, which, thus, constantly requires exceptional measures’. The spreading domestication of exceptional security has also been explored by Murakami Wood and Webster (2009) in relation to the growth of CCTV surveillance, arguing that what might have been considered at one time to be unacceptable or temporary has become mundane, everyday and unchallenged (normalised) in particular spatial contexts.

### *Creating the Olympic carceral*

High-profile sporting events have remained relatively untouched by international terrorism, although elevated ‘security’ fears are often a key priority of organising authorities. In particular, in the post 9/11 world, securing what is seen as a ‘soft target’ necessitates that major sporting often proceed against the backdrop of ‘lockdown’, ‘total’, ‘sanitised’ or ‘exceptional’ security (Coaffee and Murakami Wood 2006; Coaffee 2009b). In the context of this paper, engagement with the literatures on urban security and carceral geography helps illuminate the processes of Olympic securitisation and what this means for punitive security measures that are often rolled out before and during the ‘event’, and increasingly retained as a legacy in the post-event period. It also reveals the multiplicity of coercive techniques, allowing a better questioning of whether or not such hyper-carceral approaches are



proportionate to the threats such events face. This in turn helps reveal the uneven geographies that such securitisation produces.

In recent years we have thus become accustomed to mega-sporting spectacles such as Olympic Games, or FIFA World Cups have merged with dystopian images of cities under siege as terrorist risk has seen security professionals attempt to deliver events in maximum safety and with minimum schedule disruption (Samatas 2007; Boyle and Haggerty 2009; Klauser 2011; Boyle 2011; Fussey *et al.* 2011) with 'lockdown' security becoming an essential part of ensuring (temporary) resilience for sporting megaevents (Coaffee *et al.* 2011). Whilst much recent attention has been placed on the way such tactics and strategies were rolled out for London 2012 (Richards *et al.* 2010; Coaffee *et al.* 2011; Fussey *et al.* 2012; Coaffee and Fussey 2012; Coaffee 2013), they are by no means unprecedented. The 'superpanopticon' advanced in preparation for Athens 2004 – the first post-9/11 Summer Olympics – exemplifies this trend (Samatas 2007). In the midst of the 'war on terror', Athens spent well over five times the security budget of Sydney 2000, deploying over 70 000 specially trained police and soldiers at Olympic venues whilst another 35 000 military personnel patrolled the streets. The military hardware utilised included 13 000 surveillance cameras, mobile surveillance vans, chemical detectors, Patriot anti-aircraft missile sites, NATO troops specialising in weapons of mass destruction, AWACS early warning surveillance planes, police helicopters, fighter jets, minesweepers and monitoring airships (Samatas 2007). Yet, in many respects, Athens' (2004) high water mark of elaborate security programming represents a culmination of boarder processes of intensifying security that had been in progress since the attacks at the Munich Olympics of 1972. Munich's utopian low-security experiment was followed by an unequal and opposite reaction of elaborate and intensive security measures that have since become woven into the fabric of Olympic planning. The Montreal, Moscow and Seoul Olympics were characterised by high levels of infantry deployments, whilst the 1992 Barcelona Games, awarded to the city barely a decade after the death of Franco, brought tanks into the city centre. The Los Angeles and Seoul Olympics saw the institution of private security as a cornerstone of Olympic security planning whilst perimeter security, stockaded venues, surveillance regimes and other carceral motifs of fortress urbanism have been persistent features of every post-Munich Games. Thus, London's security programme, whilst it may be considered 'exceptional' in terms of its local impact and scales, also resides

within a number of enduring historical, political processes shaping the 'stage-set' security of sporting mega-events (Coaffee and Murakami Wood 2006).

Yet, whilst the baton of standardised features of intensive security is passed from one Olympic city to the next, it would be an error to consider such operations as completely alien to the environments that host them. For all the colonialist rhetoric of the IOC, importation of hardware from multinational security providers and the desires to set up dislocated and fortified sterile venues that are located *within* a place if not necessarily *of* it, Olympic theme parks are patrolled by domestic police forces and largely managed through local urban governance arrangements. In this sense, 'security is coming home' (Coaffee and Murakami Wood 2006). Global networks and processes intersect with, and become filtered through, the local.

### **Planning for the worst? London 2012**

Planning for the worst has become a mantra of contemporary urbanism as pre-emptive actions are increasingly mobilised in order to alleviate fears of potential catastrophe. Such pre-emption developed through the exercising of emergencies in table-top or scenario planning exercises that better allow future security challenges to be addressed (e.g. Anderson and Adey 2011) becomes very visible during megaevent hosting where a range of precautionary governance techniques are utilised in order to consider and plan for unpredictable and high consequence 'what if' events. As Boyle and Haggerty note:

[the] expressive dimension of security at the Games provides a window into wider issues of how authorities 'show' that they can deliver on the promise of maximum security under conditions of radical uncertainty [and] how officials emphasize that they have contemplated and planned for all possible security threats, especially catastrophic threats and worst-case scenarios.

Boyle and Haggerty (2012, 241)

In the UK, the securitising of sporting spectacles became increasingly prominent as London geared up to hosting the Olympic Games. Not only did security concerns and responses play a

critical part in the bidding process (notwithstanding tongue-in-cheek references to James Bond in London's candidature video), they also dominated media discussion immediately after the host city was announced. On 7 July 2005, the day after the announcement, a series of coordinated terrorist bomb attacks took place on the London transport network, prompting even more detailed security plans which saw the initial security bill quadruple from £225 million to over £1 billion and the adoption of advanced smart surveillance systems to both monitor crowds and athletes and to track suspects across the city (Fussey *et al.* 2011). In a global city famed for its policing and surveillance assets, such additions contributed significantly to the overall securitisation of the city. Indeed, Olympic security initiatives were grafted over a pre-existing security infrastructure, one which had evolved over many years due to the threat of Irish Republican and other forms of terrorism. As noted by the Metropolitan Police Authority in 2007:

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will require the largest security operation ever conducted in the United Kingdom. The success of the Games will be ultimately dependant on the provision of a safe and secure environment free from a major incident resulting in loss of life. The challenge is demanding; the global security situation continues to be characterised by instability with international terrorism and organised crime being a key component.

#### *Olympic security planning in policy and practice*

Demonstrating the domestic influence on megaevent security planning, an updated *Olympic and Paralympic Safety and Security Strategy* (Home Office 2011) was developed in March 2011 and set out the key aims and objectives for the Police and Government in delivering security for the Games. The strategy's overarching aim was 'to deliver a safe and secure Games, in keeping with the Olympic culture and spirit' (p. 7). This strategy developed was in line with the latest revised UK National Security Strategy: *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy* (October 2010) and was harmonised with the third iteration of the UK's overarching counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST (HM Government 2011). The CONTEST strategy itself specifically focused on the 2012 Games, noting that the UK had guaranteed to the IOC to 'take all financial, planning and operational measures necessary to guarantee the safety and the peaceful celebration of the Games' (p.

105). Specifically, it highlighted a set of issues related to the threat and response to heightened anticipation of terrorist attack (p. 106):

Terrorism poses the greatest security threat to the Games. . . London 2012 will take place in an unprecedentedly high threat environment. Threat levels can change rapidly but by planning against a threat level of Severe we have maximised our flexibility to respond to a range of threats. Thus, despite the range of threats and hazards facing Olympic planning, terrorism and its attendant implication of ineffective security became the principle focus of the Games' security planning overshadowing all others. As the preparations for the 2012 Olympic were finessed a range of diverse agencies became drawn into play. Here, security planning became managed by the UK Security Services, the Olympic Security Directorate and multi stakeholder London Resilience Forum who developed detailed pre-emptive security plans to sit alongside pre-existing resilience strategies, to plan out vulnerabilities in advance. Thus, broader and more disparate security planning became sharply focused on issues of terrorism and on the means of mitigation. In May 2012, three months before the Games, 'Operation Olympic Guardian' began – a preemptive scenario planning exercise intended to test security and resilience preparedness ahead of the Games. Militarised features included in this role play included the testing of air missile defence systems, the responsiveness of Typhoon jet forces and the establishment of 'No-fly' Zones over London. As one BBC correspondent noted, such an exercise has the potential both to alarm and reassure in equal measure:

Exercise Olympic Guardian is an opportunity to fine-tune military plans. But it is also aimed at reassuring the public. . . The sound of fighter jets and military helicopters, along with the sight of the Royal Navy's largest warship, HMS Ocean, in the Thames may reassure many. But for some, just talk of this military hardware is causing alarm – most notably the plans to station ground-based air defence systems at six sites around the capital.

BBC News (2012)

This again connects with an enduring set of processes by which, slowly but surely, we see military–threat– response technologies and procedures being repurposed for use in the civic realm (Graham 2010).

### *Communication and contestation*

These militarised hyper-carceral processes were communicated via a number of mechanisms. For example, leaflets informed residents of Bow Quarter that surface-to-air missiles would be stationed above their residential complex. As the Games drew near and interest in all aspects of 2012 preparation intensified, security-related stories became increasingly common in the national and international print media. Particularly notable here was the emphasis on military-carceral features of the overall Olympic security strategy. For example, many reports centred on the use of military hardware to control city spaces, airspace or transport corridors: 'Ministry of Defence to control London airspace during Games for first time since Second World War' (*Daily Telegraph* 2012b); 'Sonic device deployed in London during Olympics' (BBC News London 2012); and, 'Armoured cars drafted in as security tightens ahead of the Olympic Games' (*Daily Mirror* 2012). Other reports highlighted a set of issues regarding policing of the Games, often described as an unprecedented UK peacetime operation, with up to 12 000 officers from 52 forces deployed at 'peak time', alongside private security staff, and the utilisation of novel security technologies: 'Metropolitan police plastic bullets stockpile up to 10,000 after UK riots – Scotland Yard confirms August unrest has led to increase in stock of baton rounds as security measures upped before Olympics' (*The Guardian* 2012a); 'Metropolitan Police double officers around torch as crowds bigger than predicted' (*Daily Telegraph* 2012a); 'Metropolitan Police given 350 mobile fingerprint scanners in Olympics policing boost' (V3 News 2012); and 'Former Royal Marines to ferry around super-rich Games spectators' (*London Evening Standard* 2012).

Yet such urban incursions were not universally welcomed. As the Games approached, the uneven impact both on Londoners and visitors to the capital became highlighted: 'Fish photographer caught in Olympics terror alert: a man taking photos of a fish tank was stopped by a security guard who was supposed to be alert for hostile reconnaissance amid pre-Olympics terrorism fears' (*Amateur Photographer* 2012); 'Olympics welcome does not extend to all in London as police flex muscles; Dispersal zone at Olympic Park will target anti-social behaviour, and there are claims sex workers are being cleansed' (*The Guardian* 2012b); and 'Olympic crackdown: UK govt targets protests' (*Russia Today* 2012). 'Brand' exclusion zones

around all Olympic venues were also established (Advertising and Street Trade Restrictions venue restriction zone) so that the Olympic canvas could belong exclusively to key sponsors. This type of scrutiny also extended to the clothing of spectators which were screened for prominent displays of competing (non-Olympic) brands ('Brand police on patrol to enforce sponsors' exclusive rights', *International Business Times* 2012). Mirroring the media's specific interests, activist activity intensified and became distinctly focused upon the intensive militarised security measures being ushered into East London. One of the highest profile campaigns was the Stop the Olympic Missiles campaign, driven by the Stop the War coalition, architects of the anti-Iraq War demonstrations in 2002–3. This led to an unsuccessful yet high-profile high court challenge by residents of Fred Wigg Tower in Leytonstone contesting the Army's right to deploy missiles at their place of residence. Anti-Olympic activism reached its zenith the day after the Opening Ceremony with the 'Whose Games? Whose City?' event where hundreds of activists representing more than 30 groups and marched through Tower Hamlets in protest at the militarisation, territorial enclosure and corporatisation of the Games (see Boykoff and Fussey forthcoming).

#### *Post-Games Olympic security as local legacy*

In reality the 2012 Olympics passed off without any serious threat of terrorism being reported and with minimum disruption. The visual appearance of security was, in large part, restricted to the entrance to the venues where search procedures were carried out by the British Army. After the Games, missiles were dismantled and troops redeployed yet at the time of writing (early 2014) much of the Olympic site remains enclosed by the carceral aesthetics of the high-spec electrified fences installed prior to the Games. Less well documented in the coverage of security planning has been post-Games *legacy* that has been materially inscribed on the East London landscape, and improved organisational ways of working that have been learnt by the agencies involved in security planning. Legacy has become an Olympic watchword in recent years as host cities attempt to extract maximum value from the event as well as seeking a convenient rhetoric for diffusing difficult arguments. As Gold and Gold (2010, 2–3) note, legacy has now become 'the touchstone' by which politicians and municipal managers judge the cost and benefits of bidding to stage

major sporting events. Moreover, as host cities are selected, and pre-Games preparation starts in earnest, the rhetoric of 'legacy' promises plays an important function as the justification for a range of disruptions and cost increases. Legacy, in this context, is thus often asserted as 'fact' of what *will* happen, whereas in reality, it is based on a set of loose assumptions about what will *hopefully* occur many years in the future. Such aspirations often remain unrealised and apply particularly to promises of 'regenerated' urban landscapes after the Games. For London, this case is perhaps clearest in the way promises to build large swathes of affordable homes have been quietly reneged upon in the post-Games period (*Hackney Gazette* 2014). However, the absence of these legacies may lead to the generation of new security-focused ones. Such enclaves for the wealthy have served to generate greater demands for security from their new inhabitants (Fussey *et al.* 2012).

Security legacy was always a key component of the overall London 2012 security plan and was at the forefront of police strategies. As the Chief Inspector of Metropolitan Police noted in 2006:

We want the security legacy to be us leaving a safe and secure environment for the communities of East London after the Games, on issues such as safer neighbourhoods, lighting and crime prevention. We want a Games legacy that will reduce crime and the fear of crime.

Cited in Fussey *et al.* (2011, 153)

In London, as the post-Games period progresses, there is little sign that much of the hi-tech equipment purchased and deployed by police forces has been put away. One such example has been the retention of large numbers of mobile ANPR camera units in Newham, one of the five Olympic host boroughs (Pickles 2014). The security infrastructure is embedded within transformative urban regeneration programmes and is promoted as central to long-term community safety. It is hoped that Olympic-related security will assist in developing safer neighbourhoods, through measures such as improved lighting, and lead to a reduction in crime and the fear of crime. For example, the Olympic Village, currently in the process of being repurposed into private housing, was granted a new level of 'Secure by Design' status

set to inform the construction of future housing developments, presenting a permanent material security legacy to its residents and users.

The story of securitising the 2012 Games did not start on 7/7, but evolved over many decades into protection of the Olympic spectacle. Nor did it end once the well protected Olympic flame was extinguished at the closing ceremony. At the time, the security legacy in London is the most comprehensive plans seen for urban regeneration *and* security in modern Olympic history. Whilst at previous Olympics these security features have largely been temporary, and removed in the post-games period, in London *permanent* design and architectural features have been embedded within the material landscape. Likewise, a significant repository of knowledge and expertise has been retained in London-based networks regarding civil contingency planning for an array of disruptive challenges, and securitising urban areas at home and abroad. In its development of secure regeneration spaces, London's security community has created a 'blueprint' for knowledge transfer across the globe for when mega-events come to town.

### **Transnational legacies**

Boyle (2011) has noted in relation to what he terms 'security knowledge assemblages' (p. 171) that transnational networking amongst Government and security contractors has proliferated in response to post-9/11 Olympic security concerns which underlie the ongoing convergence and standardisation of security processes in host cities, albeit mediated by locally contingent factors and the prevailing political landscape.

Within this context, the legacy of London's security planning – at the time the most extensive in Olympic history – will not only continue in London, but its lessons transferred to preparations for other international sporting mega-events. For example, in Glasgow in preparation for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, to mitigate the international terrorist risks familiar plans are being formulated similar to that developed in London, building on the principles of perimeter security, technological surveillance, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles and intensified policing strategies. Equally, the intended 'permanence' of security infrastructure is readily being transferred, indicating a degree of



policy learning and transfer. For example, the recently released and revised CONTEST strategy (HM Government 2011) highlights explicitly how lessons from the 2012 security operation have been fed back into security planning for the 2014 Commonwealth Games, with the UK's Association of Chief Police Officers highlighting how safety and security principles are being embedded within the ongoing regeneration and build standards underway in Glasgow:

For the overall success of the Games it is vital that security measures can be embedded throughout the entire process from design, through build, to delivery of the event itself and onto the legacy.

ACPO (2011)

As in London, the intention of the Scottish Police Service is to be able to give 'Secured by Design' accreditation to the Commonwealth Games Village, designed to accommodate 7500 competitors and 1500 officials. All venues and Games sites, be they existing structures or new builds, have been scrutinised for security risk and aligned where possible with designing-out crime standards (ACPO 2011).

### *A Russian 'ring of steel'*

Further afield, core elements of the London experience were replicated at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi where a hyper-carceral security picture has emerged. In Sochi, risk was framed differently from London where the concern was the ethno-national conflict in the Northern Caucasus amidst threats by Islamic separatists to attack the Games. This fear was heightened in 2011 following the suicide bombing at Moscow's Domodedovo airport. As the Russian Deputy Prime Minister noted at this time:

We expect terrorist activity to increase the closer we get to the Sochi Olympics. That's because the terrorists want to attract as much international attention as they possibly can.

Cited in BBC News (2011)

The Sochi Candidate File (2009) also made great play of national security competences, particularly emphasising recent investments by the Russian state in the latest counter-terrorism equipment and the training of security personnel:

With excellent essential services and expert safety and emergency personnel, Sochi is confident in its capabilities. With a unified, integrated, comprehensive and coordinated approach to preserving peace and safety locally and internationally, Sochi will secure the spirit of Olympism for the 2014 Olympic Winter Games.

Russian Olympic Committee (2009, 25)

As the Games approached, on the ground, visible security – at perhaps even greater levels than seen in London – was rolled out to make the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi ‘the safest Olympics in history’ (*Boston Herald* 2013) and to protect the 6000 athletes and expected 140 000 spectators. Such security also had a significant impact on accessibility to the city and of protestors to lawfully demonstrate. The security deployed included familiar military-carceral features, such as air missile defence systems; restricted airspace; tighter national border controls; the nearby stationing of warships and high-speed patrol boats; checkpoints in perimeter fencing with an array of scanning devices for explosives and radioactive material and controlled zones for searching people and their belongings; a plethora of CCTV systems with an estimated 5500 cameras deployed as part of the ‘safe Sochi’ initiative; a bespoke Olympic CCTV control centre; passenger profiling at Sochi international airport; drones hovering overhead; robotic vehicles for bomb detection; and surface to air missile installations (see, for example, *Moscow Times* 2013). Alongside this standardised security operation sat unprecedented monitoring efforts to track telephone and online communications and detection equipment specifically designed to monitor emotional responses (*New York Times* 2014).

Controversially, protests, demonstrations and rallies that are not part of Olympic activities were also banned in Olympic spaces with the setting up of a so-called ‘forbidden zone’ (or controlled zones), established by a presidential decree which argued they were essential to ‘guarantee security’. The decree severely restricted access to and freedom of movement in Sochi and effectively banned all vehicles from the city with the exception of locally owned or

specially accredited vehicles. Human rights activists declared such measures 'unconstitutional', arguing that they amount to 'a state of emergency' (BBC 2013) where intensive screening and monitoring of people and vehicles will create a safe but 'sterile environment'.

In the weeks leading up to the Games the ban on protest rallies was lifted, with protest to be permitted in specially arranged areas under tight security. However, limits were placed on the number of people allowed to take part in demonstrations, and the 'protest zone' was geographically situated in Khosta about 12 km from the nearest Olympic arenas. International condemnation regarding the lack of demonstrations allowed from groups, such as those campaigning for gay rights and political reform, had clearly been influential in facilitating this change. Moreover, the easing of restrictions on demonstrations can also be viewed as a move to enhance Russia's image in advance of the Games, alongside an amnesty that saw the release from prison of two members of the female punk group Pussy Riot, Greenpeace activists held over a protest against Arctic oil drilling and former oil tycoon and oligarch, Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

As Games time drew near, the ratcheting up of 'total security' in and around Sochi was further enhanced as a result of two suicide bomb attacks on the southern Russian City of Volgograd in December 2013, a little over a month before the Sochi Winter Games were to begin ('Bombing raises Sochi fears', *Financial Times* 2013; 'Suicide bombing in Russia highlights Olympics security', *USA Today* 2013). These events provided a visible demonstration that crowded public areas in Sochi, and Russia more generally, were at risk of terrorist attack with particular concerns over 'black widow' suicide attacks (referring to the widows of dead insurgents from the North Caucasus). It was also noted that the police force in Volgograd had recently been reduced, with over 600 officers being redeployed to Sochi, amidst fear that terrorists might decide to attack 'easier' and less defended targets outside of the Olympic city. As the *Washington Post* (2014) noted ('IOC jeopardized safety of athletes and fans in awarding Games to Putin's Russia') there was a very real fear of terror attack displacement:

It may well be that Putin can secure the area with 60,000 police and special troops, and a cyber-dome of electronic spying and drone patrols. But Sochi is undeniably an inviting target, and so are areas outside of the security zone that will be stripped of police. The Volgograd bombings also illuminated the unprecedented security operation that was to take place during the Sochi Games, including the deployment of 42 000 police officers, 10 000 Interior Ministry Troops and 23 000 Ministry of Emergency Situation personnel in and around the city, with thousands more deployed at supposedly vulnerable locations nationwide. The hermetic security cordon that was to surround the city led the IOC, in the wake of the Volgograd attacks, to argue that the Games will be 'safe', noting that 'unfortunately, terrorism is a global phenomenon and no region is exempt, which is why security at the Games is a top priority for the IOC' (cited in *The Globe and Mail* 2013). These attacks also led to the US Government offering the Russian state full support in its final security preparations (*Wall Street Journal* 2014). In developing their security strategy, the UK's experiences of securing London 2012 were explicitly being utilised to boost the security effort (see Mail.com 2013), as the success of the security operation will have a lasting impact on Russia's reputation internationally, and will influence future policies towards Russia's republics. As Ostapenko (2010, 60) argued, the Games represent a 'huge international "comeback opportunity" to present a stronger, better, more glamorous as well as to re-position the country's image globally'.

One month before the Games began, a special administration zone was established around the BlackSea resort to enable 'lockdown security' to be fully operationalised ('Russia begins lockdown security', *Al Jazeera* 2014). As the BBC noted:

Russian military operations, with Russia pouring in over 37,000 extra troops and police and imposing a 'ring of steel' around the Olympic venue, largely closing it off from public access.

BBC (2014)

The security zone formally encased Sochi on 7 January, stretching 40 km inland and 100 km along the Black Sea coast. Within the carceral zone over 6000 infrastructural facilities or crowded places received special attention, such as bridges, tunnels, hospitals and hotels, as well as the sporting venues. All venues used hi-tech and space-based surveillance

equipment and all security personal were placed on 'combat alert'. *Reuters* (2014), 'Russia imposes security clampdown in Sochi before Olympics', painted a picture of exceptional security where long planned restrictions have now come into force, limiting the movements into and out of the city and the activities of those inside the accredited 'secure zones'. Here armed checkpoints were set up to stop and search all vehicles entering Sochi. In line with Agamben's state of exception thesis, one local resident noted: 'the resort is turning into a sort of concentration camp. Naturally this will deliver a serious blow to tourism and the huge number of people at the Olympics' (cited in *Reuters* 2014).

### *Rio's SMART resilient response*

In relation to future Summer Olympics, Rio's successful candidacy to host the 2016 Olympic Games also draws on these continuities of mega-event security. Rio's 2016 Candidate file (Rio de Janeiro 2007) argued that the city will be in a position to develop a suitable security infrastructure, facilitated by other mega-events it will host in advance of the Games:

The Games will act as a major catalyst for long-term systemic improvements in safety and security systems in the City of Rio, representing a genuine opportunity for transformation, a process already commenced through the staging of the 2007 Pan American Games and evolving with the preparation for the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Although security practices are likely to be prioritised towards long-term crime prevention programmes rather than international terrorism (Rio de Janeiro 2007), security is a major concern for Rio's organising committee (Coaffee and Fussey 2010). This is of course no guarantee that terrorists will not try and exploit the Olympic gaze and thus prevention and preparation towards potential threats to the Games – both criminal and terrorist inspired – are the highest priority and involve active cooperation between different levels of Government in Brazil and the transfer of knowledge from the international community of security specialists.

The immediate concerns in Rio were more specifically related to the city's murder rate (that annually stands at triple that of the entire UK), and fears of theft against tourists. Such issues

are likely to elevate the attention afforded to security. Such 'solutions' couple required Olympic security standards with Rio's tradition of delineating 'high-value' spaces from their urban context through crime prevention measures (Coy 2006) reinforcing the risk of further splintering of Rio's divided landscape, and providing a significant challenge to its regenerative aspirations and legacy.

Indeed recent visits to Brazil by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, intended to allow the UK security industry 'to pursue commercial opportunities and become the partner of choice for sport security' reported that:

Brazil sees a step change in the security situation in Rio as a legacy of the Olympic Games in 2016 in particular and is making progress on sustainable 'pacification' of favelas.

FCO (2011)

As in London, security planning in Rio began in the aftermath of the decision to award the Games on 2 October 2009. On 17 October 2009 fire fights between rival drug gangs resulted in a police helicopter being shot down and eight buses set on fire. This led public authorities to resolve to enhance security ahead of the Games (and the 2014 FIFA World Cup). As such, resources have been poured into programs to reduce crime and emergency planning organisation, with authorities prepared to mount an overwhelming security presence at the sporting events to ensure safety. Such operations have widened the security perimeter around Rio's residential and tourist area and notably led to the deployment of specially trained police pacification units (UPPs) in over 30 local areas to deal with communities which for years have been ruled by drug traffickers and paramilitary militias. Notably the extra impetus and funding given to the favela 'pacification' programme as a result of the 2016 Games is meaning the policing units responsible are better able to purchase more advanced surveillance equipment with some local claims that *Rocinha*, the largest *favela* in Rio, has the most expansive CCTV surveillance in the world, with more cameras per resident than London (BBC News 2013). Some have also argued in advance of the Games (see for example Freeman 2012) that such pacification is having uneven spatial consequences and forcing the poorest favela dwellers out as gentrification takes hold – a type of neoliberal

revanchist strategy which is cleansing and purifying the Olympic city to allow colonisation by the rich in areas once considered *terra incognita*.

Rio is also investing in strategic level technologies to coordinate and control its various security and disaster management processes in the build-up to the Olympic Games. Opened in 2010 the IBM-built 'operations centre' now integrates the vast majority of the city's management functions, including security, in what many are hailing as the model for 'smarter city' development (*New York Times* 2012). Not all are convinced though and 'some wonder if it is all for show, to reassure Olympic officials and foreign investors. Some worry that it will benefit well-off neighbourhoods more than the favelas. Others fear that all this surveillance has the potential to curb freedoms or invade privacy' (*New York Times* 2012). Such approaches demonstrate the importance of technological, as well as physical, features of carceral geographies. Rio's overall security plan, however, explicitly articulates a 'legacy', not for the event organisers who might be able to market Rio as a safe 'event destination', but for citizens of the city and of Brazil more generally. As the Federal Police Chief observed in March 2013, the Rio Olympics seeks to create a safety and security legacy following a history of gang related violence. He noted that crime was falling and the divided city image associated with Rio was diminishing:

Before now, we have never had a chance to help people in the favelas and they have been very isolated . . . But now that we have the World Cup coming to Brazil in 2014 and the Olympics coming to Rio in 2016, we have been able to change this. For so long Rio has been divided, but this is our chance to bridge the gap . . . We are already seeing huge success because crime rates have dropped and we are recovering areas that had never been part of society before.

This is a legacy from the Olympic Games that is happening right now and after the Olympics are gone, it will leave legacy of safety and security after so many years of violence . . . Everything is better and that is the great legacy of the Olympics.

Cited in Inside the Games (2012)

More critically, scholars have also noted how the advanced and fast-paced globalisation being experienced in Brazil has impacted upon the likely legacy of the 2016 Olympics. As Gaffney (2010, 7) has noted, the uneven geographies caused by mega-events are now a concrete part of the infrastructure planning that 'impose a neo-liberal "shock doctrine", installing temporary regimes of extra-legal governance that [will] permanently transform socio-space in Rio de Janeiro'.

### **Reflections: Olympic hyper-carcerality and proportionality**

Overall, the emerging blueprint for would-be host cities of mega sporting events incorporates a strong element of Games-time hyper-carceral security. Without a commitment to such strategies individual cities and nations are unlikely to be given the opportunity to host such events in the future. This is a trend that has been steadily growing since the wake of the terrorist attacks in Munich in 1972 through international networks which have been evolving a standardised approach to security, and one which arguably reached its zenith through security planning put in place for London 2012. More broadly, at the urban scale, hyper-carceral security apparatuses and the ability to respond are beginning to become key selling points for would-be hosts wishing to promise safety and security in the hope of boosting immediate and future economic gains. As Boyle and Haggerty noted, Olympic authorities seek to:

sustain the appearance of maximum security in order to maintain rhetorical control over what are deemed to be highly uncertain and insecure situations' and that such performances may paradoxically amplify uncertainty, thus recreating the conditions that foster the ongoing securitization of everyday life.

Boyle and Haggerty (2012, 241)

Importantly, the instigation of 'lockdown security' and punitive controls on the local population further calls into question the uneasy relationship with cities hosting events for the consumption of privileged audiences and transnational elites. This is especially the case where they are tightly secured, with the security operation largely paid for by the public who



are more often than not excluded from the 'show' or have individual freedoms and rights restricted (Coaffee and Murakami Wood 2006). Whilst the depiction of the links between neoliberal market reforms and the rise of 'a new globetrotting breed of consultants in urban security' is also a trend that can be applied to ever growing prisonfare that seeps from the jail into the ghetto as 'the invisible hand of the market is replaced by the iron fist of the penal state' (Wacquant 2011, 204, 206), it is the mega-event that often brings such security assemblages to life in a theatrical display of punitive power through (in some cases) the 'pacifying of derelict urban zones where poverty and post-colonial migrants cluster' (p. 206).

Here, the push for enhanced hyper-carceral security within the context of mega-event hosting is a complicated and expensive task. Ideally, it requires politicians and a range of other stakeholders to balance a number of considerations and adopt a proportionate response in order to minimise disruption to daily activities and to maximise the ability of all citizens to carry out their normal social, economic and democratic activities. As demonstrated in London, Sochi and Rio, and other mega-event cities, such proportionality is seldom found, with security lockdowns the preferred *modus operandi*. Here hypercarceral 'spaces of exception' become the default option as city and national reputations are at stake. Reflecting on the use of the concept of state of exception and the normalisation it often brings, in 2014 Agamben noted its evolution from being conceived as a provisional measure enacted to allow governments to cope with immediate danger and restore normality as quickly as possible, to today's usage, where, for security reasons, the state of exception constitutes 'a permanent technology of government' (Agamben 2014). In an Olympic context, the IOC dictat of security being comprehensive but unobtrusive is at odds with the lockdown security experienced in host cities and where the trend is increasingly towards increasingly military and obtrusive solutions representing an assemblage of punitive state-based approaches. Viewed through the lenses of both urban security and carceral geography, the spatial imprints and uneven geographies of such strategies can be seen to represent a contemporary carceral archipelago where the spaces that are secured, and their social and material effect on adjacent areas, the host city, or the wider nation, are relevant to contemporary urban restructuring debates within geography and contribute to the remapping of the growing scholarship on the spatial impacts of the terror and (in)security.

## Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge the very useful comments received from the two anonymous reviewers, which have helped strengthen the arguments made in the paper.

## Note

1 This latter concern has burgeoned in the wake of 9/11 and other international terror attacks but it would be wrong to assume that the events in New York and Washington DC signalled a paradigmatic shift in the development of security technologies. Rather, such events have served to illuminate and reinforce prevailing trends towards the embedding of military technologies and into the civic arena (Lyon 2003; Coaffee 2003).

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